S. Jacobi 1:20

Lapide

IRA ENIM VIRI IUSTITIAM DEI NON OPERATUR.

For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God.

Deus enim sine ira cum tranquillitate iudicat, Sapient. 12. 18. Unde S. Clemens lib. 2. Constit. cap. 37. Ubi est ira, inquit, ibi non est Dominus sed amicus Satanæ. Hinc Elias iratus cultoribus Baal, vidit Deum in specie non turbinis, sed auræ lenis, quæ symbolum est mansuetudinis, animique placidi et sereni, 3. Reg. 19. 12. Nominat iustitiam pro aliis virtutibus, quia ira induit nomen et prætextum iustitiæ : iratus enim putat asseritque se iustam necessitatis et iniuriæ sibi irrogatæ ultionem deposcere. Ira ergo iustitiæ speciem velat et palliat.	For God judges without anger and with tranquillity, Wis. 12:18. Hence St. Clement, lib. 2 of the Constitutions, chap. 37, says: "Where anger is, there the Lord is not, but the friend of Satan." Thus Elias, angry at the worshippers of Baal, saw God not in the form of a whirlwind, but of a gentle breeze, which is the symbol of meekness and of a calm and serene spirit, 3 Kings 19:12. He names justice for the other virtues, because anger puts on the name and pretext of justice: for the angry man thinks and asserts that he seeks the just vengeance due for necessity and for injury done to him. Therefore anger veils and cloaks itself under the appearance of justice.
Iam varii varios hic dant sensus. Primo, Caiet. q. d. Deus ad operandam et exercendam iustitiam non constituit iram, sed iudices : illi ergo iustitiam iusque vindicant exercentque, non ira et iratus, esto possit, viresque habeat ad se ulciscendum.	Now various interpreters give various senses here. First, Cajetan, as if he were saying: God has not appointed anger for carrying out and exercising justice, but judges; therefore they vindicate and exercise justice and right, not anger nor the angry man, even though he may be able and have the strength to avenge himself.
Secundo, Nilius Abbas tract. de ira explicat, q. d. Ira non amat, sed odit iustitiam, ac proinde adeo non operatur iustitiam, ut iniustitiam, sævitiam et crudelitatem operetur : est enim miosis : parum enim dicitur, sed plus significatur.	Secondly, Abbot Nilus, in his treatise on anger, explains it thus, as if he were saying: Anger does not love justice, but hates it, and therefore so far is it from producing justice, that it rather produces injustice, savagery, and cruelty: for this is meiosis: little is said, but more is meant.
Tertio, S. Hieron. l. 2. contra Pelag. Ira, inquit, Dei iusta est, et iustitiam operatur : quia Dei ira quieta est, et ratione ducitur : nec enim in Deo aliud est ira quam appetitus iustitiæ, iusque vindicæ : ira vero viri iniusta est, quia de perturbata mente procedit.	Thirdly, St. Jerome, lib. 2 against the Pelagians: "The anger of God," he says, "is just and worketh justice, because the anger of God is tranquil and is guided by reason; nor indeed is anger in God anything else than the desire for justice and the right of vengeance: but the anger of man is unjust, because it proceeds from a disturbed mind."
Quarto, S. Gregor. lib. 5. Moral. cap. 30. Ira viri, inquit, iustitiam non operatur : quia dum perturbata mens iudicium suæ rationis exasperat, omne quod furor suggerit rectum putat. Unde ergo pro iustitia sibi sumit furorem, eumque censet esse iustitiam : quia adeo cæca est, mentemque occaecat, ut unum contrariarum pro altero cernat : velut si quis turbato visu, id quod album est cœruleum, et vice versa.	Fourthly, St. Gregory, lib. 5 of the Morals, chap. 30: "The anger of man," he says, "worketh not justice: because when a disturbed mind inflames the judgment of its reason, it thinks whatever fury suggests to be right." Hence a man takes fury for justice, and judges it to be justice; for anger is so blind and so darkens the mind that it sees one of two contraries for the other: as when a man with disturbed sight sees what is white as blue, and vice versa.

Quinto, genoine et adæquate, iustitia hic generalim sumitur pro quolibet virtute, q. d. Ira non operatur id quod iustum, æquum, rectum, honestum et sanctum est, sed multa perpetrat contra mansuetudinem, charitatem, modestiam, prudentiam, æquitatem, cæterasque virtutes, quas exigit et complectitur iustitia Christiana. Alludit S. Iacobus ad Ecclesiastici 1. 28. Qui sine timore est, non poterit iustificari : iracundia enim animositatis illius, subversio illius est. Ira ergo extinguit in animo irati omnem patientiam, humilitatem, charitatem, iustitiam, etc.

Fifthly, genuinely and adequately, justice is here taken generally for any virtue, as if he were saying: Anger does not produce that which is just, fair, right, honorable, and holy, but commits many things against meekness, charity, modesty, prudence, equity, and the other virtues which Christian justice requires and includes. St. James alludes to Ecclesiasticus 1:28: “He that is without fear shall not be able to be justified: for the wrath of his animosity is his ruin.” Therefore anger extinguishes in the soul of the angry man all patience, humility, charity, justice, etc.

Recte S. Thom. 3. p. q. 15. a. 9. ad 1. quærens an in Christo fuerit ira, cum S. Iacobus dicat iram non operari iustitiam ; Respondet iram tunc proprie dici operari, cum prævenit rationem, eamque suo rapit ad operandum : secus est cum sequitur rationem, eiusque est instrumentum, uti fuit in Christo et Sanctis. Ira, inquit, dupliciter se habet in homine ; quandoque enim prævenit rationem, et trahit eam secum ad operandum, et tunc proprie ira dicitur operari : nam operatio tribuitur principali agenti. Et secundum hoc intelligitur, quod ira viri iustitiam Dei non operatur. Quandoque vero ira sequitur rationem, et est quasi instrumentum ipsius, et tunc operatio quæ est iustitiæ, non attribuitur iræ, sed rationi ; quia ira utitur quasi instrumento ad opus utendum, v. g. iustæ vindictæ.

Rightly does St. Thomas, 3 p., q. 15, a. 9, ad 1, asking whether there was anger in Christ, since St. James says that anger does not work justice, reply that anger is then properly said to act when it goes before reason and snatches reason with itself to action: otherwise it is when anger follows reason and is its instrument, as it was in Christ and the Saints. “Anger,” he says, “is related to man in two ways; for sometimes it goes before reason and draws it along with itself to action, and then anger is properly said to act: for operation is attributed to the principal agent. And in this sense is understood that the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. But sometimes anger follows reason and is, as it were, its instrument; and then the operation which belongs to justice is not attributed to anger, but to reason, because anger is used as an instrument for the work,” for example, “of just vengeance.”

Accepit hoc S. Thomas a S. Gregorio, qui l. 7. ep. 126. Recharedum regem Gothorum, monens cum ne in regendo iram admisceat : Curandum, inquit, est, ne ira surrepat. Ne fiat citius omne quod licet. Ira quippe cum delinquentium culpas exquirit, non debet quasi domina præire, sed post rationis tergum velut ancilla famulari, ut ad faciem iussa veniat : nam si semel mentem ceperit, iustum esse deputat etiam quod crudeliter fecit. Hinc enim scriptum est : Ira viri iustitiam Dei non operatur.

St. Thomas took this from St. Gregory, who in book 7, epistle 126, warning Reccared, king of the Goths, not to mix anger into his rule, says: “Care must be taken lest anger steal in. Let not everything which is lawful be done too quickly. For anger, when it investigates the faults of offenders, ought not to go before like a mistress, but to serve behind the back of reason like a handmaid, so that it may come to the face when commanded: for if once it seizes the mind, it judges even what it has cruelly done to be just.” Hence it is written: “The anger of man worketh not the justice of God.”

Ex adverso de S. Mose dicitur Ecclesiastici 45. v. 4. In fide et lenitate ipsius sanctum fecit illum, et elegit eum ex omni carne. Ita S. Augustinus Epist. 75. ad Auxilium Episcopum iuvenem, qui ex ira videbatur præcipitasse sententiam excommunicationis in Classicianum ; monet ut oret, et exclamat ad Deum : Turbatus est præ ira oculus meus. Miserere mei Domine, quoniam infirmus sum : ut porrigat dexteram suam, et comprimát iracundiam tuam, et tranquillét mentem tuam ad videndam faciendamque iustitiam. Sicut enim scriptum est : Ira viri iustitiam Dei non operatur.

On the contrary, of St. Moses it is said in Ecclesiasticus 45:4: “In his faith and meekness He sanctified him, and chose him out of all flesh.” Thus St. Augustine, Epistle 75 to Auxilius, a young bishop, who from anger seemed to have rushed into a sentence of excommunication against Classicianus, warns him to pray, and cries out to God: “My eye is troubled because of anger. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak,” that He “may stretch forth His right hand and restrain thy wrath, and calm thy mind for seeing and doing justice.” For as it is written: “The anger of man worketh not the justice of God.”

Ita S. Ambros. lib. 1. Offic. cap. 21. laudat Architam philosophum, quod ad villicum suum dixerit : O te infelicem, quam cæderem nisi iratus essem ! Sed etiam David armatam dexteram in indignatione compressit : et bellatores adversus Nabal ad ultionem paratos Abigail deprecatione revocavit, 1. Regum 25.

Thus St. Ambrose, lib. 1 De Officiis, chap. 21, praises the philosopher Archytas because he said to his steward: “O unhappy man, how I would beat thee, were I not angry!” But David also restrained his armed right hand in indignation, and Abigail by her entreaty recalled the warriors prepared for vengeance against Nabal, 1 Kings 25.

Idem Ambr. de obitu Theodosii Imper. eum laudat a dominatu iræ, dicens : Beneficum se putabat, et tunc proprior erat venia, cum fuisset commotio maior iracundiæ. Prærogativa cognoscendæ erat indignationis fuisse, et optabatur in eo, quod in aliis timebatur, ut irasceretur.	The same Ambrose, in De Obitu Theodosii Imperatoris, praises him for mastery over anger, saying: “He thought himself beneficent, and then pardon was nearer when the movement of anger had been greater. It was a special mark of recognizable indignation to have existed, and men desired in him what in others was feared: that he should become angry.”
Idem lib. 2. Offic. cap. 7. David, inquit, fortis in prælio, mansuetus in imperio, patiens in convicio, ferre magis promptus quam referre iniurias. Ideo tam charus erat omnibus, ut iuvenis ad regnum etiam peteretur invitus, resisteret cogeretur, senex ne prælio interesset a suis rogaretur, quod mallent omnes pro ipso periclitari, quam ipsum pro omnibus.	The same, lib. 2 De Officiis, chap. 7: “David,” he says, “was brave in battle, gentle in command, patient under insult, more ready to bear injuries than to repay them. Therefore he was so dear to all, that as a young man he was sought for the kingdom even unwillingly and was compelled when he resisted; and as an old man he was asked by his own men not to take part in battle, because all preferred to be endangered for him rather than he for all.”